Freedom Watch

Citizens Project

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Citizens Project

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Tracking Colorado hate groups

by Timothy Dobbs

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), located in Montgomery, Alabama, is a nonprofit organization that combats hate, intolerance, and discrimination through education and litigation. One of its programs is the Intelligence Project, which tracks hate-group activity throughout the United States. The following is in their report of hate-group activity in the state of Colorado in 2001. Activities may include criminal acts, marches, rallies, speeches, meetings, leafleting, or publishing. Being listed on the Intelligence Project's report does not imply that a group advocates or engages in violence or other criminal activity, however. Websites are provided for each of the following hate groups. Please be forewarned that these sites may contain very offensive images and words.

The National Socialist Movement is a Neo-Nazi organization that believes capitalism and communism are "shams" because they are systems of government that allow Jews to have power.

Scriptures for America Ministries

Prior to becoming the evangelistic head of Scriptures for America Ministries Worldwide and the pastor of Laporte Church of Christ in the small town of Laporte just northwest of Fort Collins, Peter J. Peters had a successful career with the United States Department of Agriculture. According to their website (www.scripturesforamerica.org), SFAMW is "an international outreach ministry dedicated to preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to revealing to the Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, and kindred peoples of the world their

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Politicians turn up rhetoric at UCCS

by Colleen Vivori, CP intern

The UCCS College Democrats and College Republicans hosted a political debate with local legislators and prospective candidates at the university on Tuesday, March 5. There were three representatives each, from the Republican and Democratic parties. Republicans included Representative Keith King, Senator Doug Lamborn, and Representative David Schulteis's legislative aid Dave Craver. Democrats in attendance included Fred Hardee, chair of the El Paso Democratic Party; Bruce Doyle, a leading figure in School District 11 education and candidate for House District 18; and P.M. Wynn, candidate for House District 17.

Student-driven questions touched on vouchers, raising taxes vs. cutting programs, the success of CSAP, and concealed weapons permits. The answers ranged from extreme to moderate, and on some issues there was agreement while other issues gleaned a wide difference of opinion. One of the questions directed to the panel was "What is your opinion of subsidizing religious schools through the form of vouchers?"

Rep. King replied that he was a strong advocate of vouchers for choice and that he was also a strong advocate of charter schools. He felt that competition raises the academic bar, which in turn raises the levels of achievement. Senator Lamborn was in tune with King, stating, "the more competition, the better off we are." Lamborn noted that while he was a strong advocate of public schools, he had no problem with giving vouchers to parents. He also made the point that vouchers are not unconstitutional because there is not a direct passing of money to religious organizations. Craver reiterated the sentiments of the first two, adding his opinion about the First Amendment. He said that the purpose of the First Amendment is to keep from establishing a state religion and that it is actually a common misconception that the framers intended a separation of church and state.

On the Democratic side, P.M. Wynn felt that public education was not failing, and that it was the parents that were failing. Wynn's comments shifted the conversation to a broader discussion of school reform with her idea that attention ought to be paid to parents rather than just to schools. Bruce Doyle felt that vouchers do not benefit the people they are designed to help. He contended that vouchers go to the rich and not the poor. He also made the point that vouchers have been defeated twice in the state. Doyle also brought up that in the Colorado State Constitution states that you cannot give tax money to private individuals. Fred Hardee's main point in his speech was that the way out of poverty is through education.

Another question, posed to Senator Lamborn, was about several of the legislative bills about patriotism. Lamborn quickly defended his defeated bill, SB 123, about the right to display common patriotic symbols, by claiming that it was a party-line vote that quashed it. He commented that the bill probably would have passed had it been assigned to a different committee. To further prove why he introduced the bill, he referred to an incident in Boulder where a library was not

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The CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) Billboard public awareness campaign is aimed towards promoting good will between Muslims and their neighbors. Starting with "Even a Smile is Charity," each billboard will continue with the theme of tolerance, unity, and kindness. The Southern California chapter is currently raising funds for local billboards with hopes to spread their campaign to other cities.

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true Biblical identity." Pastor Peters' sermons are posted on the website and broadcast weekly on shortwave radio. His sermons focus on the descendents of the twelve tribes of *Israel as the chosen white race* and contain convoluted quoted scripture to support such claims.

National Skinhead Front

With a chapter located in the Denver area, the National Skinhead Front is dedicated to Aryan skinhead unity. According to their website (www.whitevictory.com), they believe "negroes, jews, and foreigners" are destroying their white heritage by "infesting neighborhoods with crime, drugs, and rape." Their hatred is not only for nonwhite races but also for homosexuals and the government. Their Website contains a plethora of profanities and is difficult to read because of grammatical errors.

MSR Productions

MSR Productions (www.msrproductions.com) is a large distributor of racial musical products and is located in Wheatridge. Their motto is "In Service of the Anglo-Saxon Race since 1988!" They have a huge inventory of domestic and imported CDs, T-shirts, sweatshirts, flags, books, and videos all supporting the supremacy of the white race.

The World Church of the Creator

The Colorado contact listed on their website (www.wcotc.com) is located in Aurora, but according to The Intelligence Report activity was centered near Gunnison in 2001. The World Church of the Creator is headquartered in Peoria, Illinois with chapters listed worldwide, including 24 states in the U. S. They claim to be a religious organization, stating that their race is their religion. They've named their religion Creativity and all followers are called Creators who believe "that what is good for the White Race is the highest virtue, and what is bad for the White Race is the ultimate sin." The founder Ben Klassen has written over a dozen publications including, *The White Man's Bible*, which is not associated with Christian scripture, but rather details a physically healthy, white lifestyle. Their supreme leader is 31-year-old Reverend Matthew Hale who gives "sermons" and radio broadcasts weekly detailing the supremacy of the white race "based on the Eternal Laws of Nature, History, Logic and Common Sense." Their official greeting is "RAHOWA!" which stands for Racial Holy War.

Their ultimate goal is a revolution to overthrow the government, which they believe is run by Jews who are plotting to destroy white America by convincing whites to marry nonwhites, thus obliterating the white race.

National Alliance

With a chapter located in Denver (www.natallcom.com), The National Alliance is American's premiere Neo-Nazi group and may have inspired the Oklahoma City bombing. The NA is headed by William Pierce, a long-time member of the American Nazi Party, and the author of *The Turner Diaries* (an instructional book on bringing about a revolution). According to Tolerance.org, "the novel was employed by Timothy McVeigh as a blueprint for the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing." Their ultimate goal is a revolution to overthrow the government, which they believe is run by Jews who are plotting to destroy white America by convincing whites to marry nonwhites, thus obliterating the white race. The NA distorts history and the media to support this conspiracy theory. Resistance Records, a record label promoting white-power music known as "hatecore," is owned by Pierce and is used as a key recruitment tool.

National Socialist Movement

The National Socialist Movement (www.nsm88.com) is a Neo-Nazi organization that believes capitalism and communism are "shams" because they are systems of government that allow Jews to have power. They are headquartered in Minneapolis with chapters nationwide including one in Castle Rock, Colorado. They have a training program for youths called the Viking Youth Corps, which trains white children to become NSM officers by teaching military skills and National Socialist Theory and Practice, with specialized training in propaganda, public speaking, unit operations, public operations, and staff operations.

Aryan Nations

Aryan Nations (www.aryannations.org) is a Neo-Nazi organization grounded in the belief that the white race is called by God to destroy all nonwhite people, especially Jews. Their motto is "Fighting Jewish Takeover for Over 25 Years." They believe in "active self-defense" (a term originally used to describe a recent Israeli campaign of selective assassinations, and what Aryan Nations has adopted to describe "any Aryan, on nonwhite killing)." They are headquartered in Ulysses, Pennsylvania with chapters worldwide, including one in DeBeque, a small town northeast of Grand Junction.

To learn more about identifying hate in your community and ways in which to fight it, visit the SPLC websites at www.splcenter.org and www.tolerance.org. Both sites provide an abundance of information and materials to promote tolerance and education.

Quote of Note

"There are no atheists in foxholes."

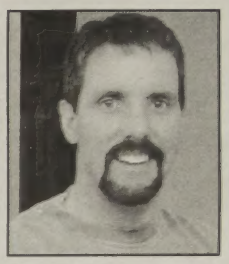
~El Paso County Commissioner Chuck Brown, defending the Board of Commissioners' resolution with his view that when it comes to death, everyone turns to prayer.

Commissioner Duncan Bremer added his sentiments that once we have vouchers and get government out of public schools, we'll have freedom to teach religion in schools.

The resolution, passed unanimously April 18, is part of a grass roots movement, "to reinstate prayer in public schools."

Citizens Project

Support Colorado's Bias-Motivated Crimes Bill



A word from board chair, Richard Conway

The Bias-Motivated Crimes Bill (a.k.a Senate Bill 9) is currently under review by the Colorado House's State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee. With bipartisan support, the measure is sponsored by Senator Penfield Tate, (D) – Denver, and Representative Mark Larson, (R) – Southwestern CO; The bill would expand the crime of ethnic intimidation that already incorporates race, color, ancestry, religion, and national origin, to include threatening a person because of a physical or mental disability, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The bill also changes the name from "ethnic intimidation" to "bias-motivated" crime, creates a training component for law enforcement, and provides for alternative sentencing and restorative justice programs.

Across the United States, efforts are underway to punish perpetrators of bias-based violence through new or expanded legislation. The FBI classifies a crime as bias-motivated when it is clear that the offender's actions were motivated, in whole or in part, by prejudice. In recent years, the murders of Oumar Dia, an immigrant from Africa shot by skinheads; James Byrd, an African American man dragged to his death behind a pickup truck in Texas; and Matthew Shepard, a gay college student beaten and left to die in Wyoming, have provided heinous examples of bias-motivated crimes. Not all hate crimes result in death; survivors of bias crimes suffer two to three times as many symptoms of trauma as victims of comparable crimes not involving prejudice. In addition to the violent acts listed above, the events of September 11th have prompted several unprovoked attacks on individuals from certain ethnic groups across the United States.

Opponents of bias-motivated-crime bills claim that this type of legislation would "severely restrict Americans' freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and freedom of religion ... and give the government the power to interpret and classify certain speech, thought, and theology as unlawful or contributing to crime." The fact is that bias-motivated crime legislation would punish acts of violence, not speech, thoughts, or beliefs. In other words, property or personal damage (or a legitimate threat of such) must occur for an act to be considered bias-motivated.

Bias-motivated crime legislation would have local impact. Closer to home, the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center was set on fire last month. The legislation being reviewed by the Colorado Senate would provide law enforcement officials with the necessary training to determine if the fire was indeed bias-motivated. While the recent slurs and stereotypes contained in the "April Fool's Edition" of Colorado College's student-published newsletter, *The Catalyst*, would not be considered a bias-motivated crime, the remarks certainly create an atmosphere of intolerance that could easily encourage violence.

Expanding Colorado's Ethnic Intimidation Act would send an important message throughout the state–and the nation–that Coloradans will not accept crimes based on intolerance toward often-targeted groups. It's time that we adopt legislation that addresses this issue. Please call or write your local representatives and ask them to support Senate Bill 9. For more information on Senate Bill 9 and contacts for state legislators, go to Helpful Links at the Citizens Project Website at www.citizensproject.org and click on Activist Alerts and Project Vote Smart, sequentially.

(Additional information provided by People for the American Way.)

Where is the wall of separation between church and state?

by LeAnn Baca Bartlett

The separation of church and state is constantly in the news. Displays of the Ten Commandments, vouchers for private school, and government funding of religious charities: these all involve discussion of the separation of church and state. So where does the idea originate and why do some question the concept?

"Church-state separation is a myth."

False. *The Myth of Separation*, independently published by David Barton in 1989, attributes statements to Thomas Jefferson claiming that Jefferson meant the wall of separation to be "one-directional" protecting the church from the government. The statements have been proven false, but the material still misleads the public, especially since Barton's book has been publicized and cited by public figures such as Pat Robertson, formerly of the Christian Coalition. In a 1992 document, the Colorado Christian Coalition added to Barton's claims that Jefferson said the government should be based on "Christian principles." Constitutional scholars have documented that this claim, too, is false.

"The phrase 'separation of church and state' does not appear in the Constitution."

True. Generally associated with Thomas Jefferson, the phrase 'wall of separation between church and state' appears in his 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists. A second Constitutional influence, James Madison, advocates a "separation between religion and government in the Constitution of the United States," in an essay of the same period. The phrase summarizes the Constitutional principle of the First Amendment and Clause 3 of Article VI.

The Bill of Rights (the first ten amendments to the Constitution) outlines basic rights of the people. The First Amendment reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise therof;" these two clauses are referred to as the establishment clause and free exercise clause respectively. Free exercise provides religious liberty, while the establishment clause bars the government from favoring one religion over another through an establishment of religion. While government will not establish or favor one religion, it also will not bar persons from having a religion.

The other part of the Constitution that discusses religion is Clause 3 of Article VI: "No religious Test shall ever be required as a qualification to any Office or public trust under the United States." The conversations out of which this clause came are just one example making the next statement illogical.

"This country was founded by Christians for Christians."

False. While the majority of the founders were Christian, the notion that the nation was founded *for* Christians is not true. Opportunities to exclude persons based on their faith or lack of adherence to an organized religion were discussed at length. At the time of the Constitution's creation, there were conversations about excluding Catholics, since they acknowledged foreign power through the Pope, and excluding Atheists, because they "have no principles of value." Newspapers of the period printed arguments for excluding Muslims and Deists, as well. Italy, Spain, Portugal, and England restricted political activity to members of their state religions.

Instead of favoring one Christian denomination over another or excluding followers of philosophies outside the Christian tradition, Constitutional designers chose a more inclusive route. Clause 3, Article VI, is the conclusion of those discussions. Authors of the Constitution were careful not to favor one religion over another and opened service to the government to all citizens.

Faith and religion were strong and important to many of these men, but in the end, religious language was kept to a minimum and the religious terms were kept nonsectarian.

Although these are the only areas of the Constitution that speak of the entanglement between religious organizations and the government, these two relatively small passages are not all there is. The principle for the separation of church and state encompasses not only phrases in the Constitution, but also the culture out of which the Constitution came, and verdicts in the Supreme Court.

Continued interpretation of the Constitution: the Supreme Court

Verdicts of the Supreme Court can be just as significant as the original document. For example, a Supreme Court decision in 1940 ruled that the Bill of Rights applies to state government as well as federal. Prior to 1940, the court heard only federal cases.

In Lemon v. Murdoch, 1971, the Court outlined three statements, (called the Lemon Test) to test the constitutionality of religious activity in public schools: "First, the statute must have a secular legislative purpose; second, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion, *Board of Education v. Allen* (1968); finally the statute must not foster 'an excessive government entanglement with religion.'" These criteria were based on previous cases and were used quite often until the last decade, when they fell out of favor with some Supreme Court Justices.

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allowed to display the American flag. He discussed how Andrews' SB 136, the bill about encouraging public schools to teach age-appropriate units on patriotism, was probably going to be stripped down into a pure Pledge of Allegiance Bill. The revised bill would mandate the saying of the Allegiance every morning in public schools. Lamborn felt that having these bills was a positive reminder of patriotism, especially in the current atmosphere.

All six panelists were knowledgeable on the given issues, and it was quite interesting to hear both sides of the issues. The College Republicans and College Democrats hosted an evening that sparked the political interest of many students. It was nice to see local politicians taking their time to come to the university, and it was even better to see that students were civic-minded enough to attend a politically heated debate.

Citizens Project

Newsbriefs

U. S. Supreme Court voucher update

At the end of June, the Supreme Court will rule on the constitutionality of the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program. This voucher program gives students as much as $2,250 a year to spend toward private school tuition, including religious schools. The U.S. Court of Appeals found the program to be an unconstitutional use of state funds for support of religious establishments. The program began six years ago and today 96% of the voucher program dollars go to religious-affiliated schools. The Cleveland public schools lost over $11 million dollars last year due to the voucher program. The program is supposed to help low-income families have better educational opportunities; however, over 40% of the students receiving vouchers are above the poverty line. Schools receiving voucher dollars are not subject to the accountability standards by which public schools are judged. As Annie Laurie Gaylor, editor of *Free Thought Today*, states, "The issue is whether, under our constitution, taxpayers can be forced to subsidize religious schools."

On the other side, the state of Ohio and the 4,000 children in the program have appealed to the Supreme Court, claiming the program benefits students in public and private schools. Advocates of the Cleveland voucher program include the Bush administration, former New York City mayor Rudolph Giulianni, and the Roman Catholic Church. The supporters of the voucher program claim the program is neutral because parents can choose which type of school they want.

Supreme Court justices are split on the verdict. Justice David H. Souter stated, "There is something specious about this notion of wide open choice." Some other justices are clearly in favor of the voucher system. Justice Antonin Scalia said, "It's not a money problem, it's a monopoly problem," citing voucher competition as a needed spark to an ailing school system. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor is predicted to be the swing vote of the case.

Dismissals and reports of anti-gay harassment increase

Recent reports on the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy show that dismissals of homosexuals are on the rise, as well as anti-gay harassment, according to the *Denver Post*, March 14.

The majority of the dismissals for homosexual conduct or stating one's homosexuality are highest in the Army, which discharged 616 people in 2001. Fort Campbell, KY dismissed 222 members of that 616 and has had the highest concentration of dismissals for the past two years. It was at this base that Private First Class Barry Winchell was bludgeoned to death by a fellow soldier who thought he was gay.

Reports of anti-gay harassment have increased 23% from 871 to 1,075 between 2000 and 2001 according to a report by the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, an advocacy group, which publishes an annual report on the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. The Pentagon's own inspector general's report says that anti-gay behavior is common and in 2000 announced an increase in training to eliminate harassment and educate personnel. The advocacy group says that the military has made few changes and "allows an anti-gay atmosphere to pervade its ranks by failing to hold commanders accountable when harassment is reported," according to the *Post's* article.

Court denies ballot proposal

On April 9, the Colorado Supreme Court dismissed a proposed 2002 constitutional amendment that would eliminate bilingual education across the state. English Plus, a coalition of organizations that opposes the measure. The organization opposes the amendment because it would limit local power of schools and choices of teaching methods. The proposal is backed by California millionaire Ron Unz and English for the Children, an "English only" advocacy group. One objection raised by the court was that voters might not recognize that schools could deny native-language instruction, even if requested by parents. The overall recommendation was that the "title," the words appearing on the ballot, should be more clear.

English for the Children may resubmit the ballot initiative in a manner that addresses the court's current objections by May 3, 2002 and then, if the language passes the court, organizers must gather the required signatures for submission to the state, by August 5.

Announcements

Urban League annual dinner

The Urban League of the Pikes Peak Region will host its annual dinner at the Sheraton Hotel, Tuesday, May 7. The evening will feature an auction, community awards, and a portrayal of Aunt Clara Brown by Opalanga Pugh. Tickets are $50, call the Urban League at 634-1525 for reservations.

El Cinco de Mayo

El Cinco de Mayo, Inc. is putting on the 19th annual Cinco de Mayo Celebration on Friday May 3rd and Sunday May 5th. On Friday night a dinner and dance will take place at the Sheraton Hotel (2886 S Circle Dr) starting at 6 PM with a social hour. The keynote speaker will be Vice Mayor of Colorado Springs, Lionel Rivera. The dance will feature Tobias Rene, Gonzolo, and The D. Girls. Tickets are $45 per person or $450 per corporate table. The dance tickets alone cost $25 dollars ($10 for college students.)

On Sunday the festivities continue with an all-day Fiesta in Memorial Park (SW corner of Union and Pikes Peak). At 9:30 AM there will be a fiesta mass given by Father Gene. Music and a car show will follow. Featured groups include Amistad Band at 11:30, Ballet Folklorico de la Raza Dancers at 1:15, and Grupo Marquise Band at 2:15.

Contact Chris Martinez at 520-2416 or Carmen Abeyta at 450-0863 for more information.

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Our Mission: Citizens Project is a grassroots organization in the Pikes Peak region dedicated to upholding the traditional American values of pluralism, freedom of religion, and separation of church and state.

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